

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.173(g), all amendments are made with respect to the patent specification which were in effect as of the date of filing of this reissue application.

1. **(Twice Amended)** A support belt adapted for encircling and being secured to the waist of a wearer for providing both back and abdominal muscle support during strenuous activity while providing a non-interfering support and a non-interfering fit with the skeletal structure of the ribs and hips of the wearer, the belt comprising:

a. an elongate base having a longitudinal axis and opposite outer ends and of a length sufficient to encircle the waist of the wearer, the base including an enlarged back support area and an enlarged abdominal support area, each area of a first fixed predetermined vertical height and each area being integral within the base, **[and made of a semi-rigid material wrapped in a flexible cloth for comfort]**, the areas being disposed within the base such that the areas are opposite one another when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer;

b. reduced side areas within the base, having a second predetermined vertical height smaller than said first predetermined vertical height and disposed intermediately of the back support and abdominal support areas and opposite one another between the hips and ribs of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist, said reduced side areas being sized to allow the belt to be sufficiently tightened against the back and abdominal walls without encountering the skeletal structure of the ribs or hips of the wearer thereby evenly distributing and providing optimum support to both the back and abdominal walls and accommodate bending and side-to-side motion of the wearer;

**[c. a first fastening means comprising a first pad portion at one end of the base and a second pad portion disposed at the other end of the base, the first and second pad portions adapted to be placed in overlying, releasably secured relationship with one another when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer;**

**d. an elongate strap of flexible, generally non-stretchable material secured to and coaxial with the base, and having free opposite ends;**

**e. a second, cinchable fastening means on the strap comprising a fastener secured to one of said strap ends and a flap on the other end adapted to be received in**

and secured by said fastener and cinched to fit when the belt is placed around the waist of the wearer; and

f. means for securing the first fastening means after the belt is properly cinched.]

c. an elongate strap of flexible, material axially secured to the base, having at least one free opposite end;

d. a first fastener comprising a first pad portion at one end of the elongate strap and a second pad portion disposed inwardly of the first pad portion, the first and second pad portions adapted to be placed in overlying, releasably secured relationship with one another; and

e. a second fastener comprising a buckle through which the at least one free end may pass so as to allow the first pad portion of the first fastener to contact the second pad portion of the first fastener.

2. (Twice Amended) The support belt of claim 1, wherein the first fastener is adapted to cinch through the buckle of the second fastener. [first and second pad portions at the ends of the base define an abdominal support pad and the back support area further defines a back support pad.]

3. (Once Amended) The support belt of claim 2, wherein the abdominal support pad portions, when in overlying relationship with one another, have abutting surfaces, and wherein the first pad portion [means for securing the first fastening means] [further] comprises a first hook and loop fastener pad [on the abutting surface of the first pad portion] and the second pad portion comprises a complementary hook and loop fastener pad [on the complementary abutting surface of the second pad portion, whereby] so that the belt may be secured to the waist of the wearer [when the belt is encircling the waist and the abdominal support pad portions are disposed in overlying relationship with one another].

4. The support belt of claim 2, wherein said back support area and said abdominal support area are each of approximately five inches in vertical height and the reduced side areas are each of approximately three inches in vertical height.

5. (Twice Amended) The support belt of claim 1, the [second] first fastener [fastening means] further comprising:

a first pad portion at one end of the base and a second pad portion disposed at the other end of the base, the first and second pad portions adapted to be placed in overlying, releasably secured relationship with one another when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer,

[a. a] the first pad portion comprising a first [strap] hook and loop fastener pad [on the strap and disposed inwardly of the fastening means on said one end]; and

[b. a] the second pad portion comprising a second strap hook and loop fastener pad [on the flap and] complementary with the first [strap] hook and loop fastener pad[, whereby the flap means is secured to the belt when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer].

6. The support belt of claim 1, further comprising utility rings secured to the belt at the reduced side areas for securing the belt directly to a harness or implement to be moved or lifted by the wearer that provides an ability to use the trunk of the body to aid in the activity with added safety.

7. (Twice Amended) A support belt adapted for encircling and being secured to the waist of a wearer for providing both back and abdominal muscle support during strenuous activity while providing a non-interfering fit with the skeletal structure of the ribs and hips of the wearer, the belt comprising:

a. an elongate base having a longitudinal axis and opposite outer ends and made of flexible material to accommodate the various movements of the waist and associated placement of the hips and ribs of the wearer;

b. an enlarged back support area having a first fixed predetermined vertical height and integral within the base such that the area supports the back of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer;

c. an enlarged first abdominal support portion located on one outer end of the base and having a second fixed predetermined vertical height [substantially the same as] no larger than the first fixed predetermined vertical height of the back support and positioned to define an abdominal support area opposite the back support area and located in the vicinity

of the abdominal wall of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist;

d. an enlarged second abdominal support portion located on the other outer end of the base and the first abdominal support portion located on one outer end of the base and having a fixed predetermined vertical height coexistent with said first abdominal support height and positioned such that the abdominal support area is diametrically opposite the back support area and is located in the vicinity of the abdominal wall of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist, said abdominal support portions adapted to be located in overlying relationship with one another when the belt is encircling the waist;

e. reduced side sections of the base having a second predetermined vertical height smaller than said first **and second** predetermined vertical **heights [height]** and located on the base intermediately of the areas and opposite one another between the hips and ribs of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist, said reduced side sections being sized to allow the belt to be sufficiently tightened against both the back and abdominal walls without encountering the skeletal structure of the ribs or hips of the wearer thereby evenly distributing and providing optimum support to both the back and abdominal walls; **[and]**

f. a first **fastener [fastening means]** for releasably securing the base about the waist of the wearer;

g. an elongate strap of flexible, generally non-stretchable material secured **adjacent one base end [to]** and **[coaxial] axially aligned** with the base, and having **a free end [opposite ends]**; and

h. **[a second, cinchable fastening means on the strap comprising a fastener secured to one of said strap ends and a flap adapted to be received in and secured by said fastener and cinched to fit when the belt is placed around the waist of the wearer.] a second fastener comprising a buckle wherein the buckle is adapted to receive the elongate strap so as to allow the support belt to be cinched to fit when the support belt is placed around the waist of the wearer.**

8. **(Twice Amended)** The support belt of claim 7, wherein said second **fastener [fastening means]** further comprises:

a. a first strap hook and loop fastener pad on the strap and disposed inwardly of the fastener at said one end; and

b. a second strap hook and loop fastener pad on the flap and complementary with the first strap hook and loop fastener pad, [whereby] so that the flap may be secured to the belt when the belt is encircling the waist.

9. The support belt of claim 8, wherein the abdominal support portions, when in overlying relationship with one another, have abutting surfaces and wherein the first fastening means further comprises a first hook and loop fastener pad on the abutting surface of one abdominal support portion and a complementary abdominal hook and loop fastener pad on the complementary abutting surface of the other abdominal support portion, [whereby] so that the belt may be secured to the waist of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist and the abdominal support portions are disposed in overlying relationship with one another.

10. The support belt of claim 8, further comprising utility rings secured to the belt at the reduced side sections for securing the belt directly to a harness or implement to be moved or lifted by the wearer that provides an ability to use the trunk of the body to aid in the activity with added safety.

11. (Amended) The support belt of claim 7 [8], wherein said back support area and said abdominal support areas are each of approximately five inches in vertical height and the reduced side portions are each of approximately three inches in vertical height.

12. (Amended) A support belt adapted for encircling and being secured to the waist of a wearer for providing both back and abdominal muscle support during strenuous activity while providing a non-interfering support and a non-interfering fit with the skeletal structure of the ribs and hips of the wearer, the belt comprising:

a. an elongate base having a longitudinal axis and opposite outer ends and of a length sufficient to encircle the waist of the wearer, the base including an enlarged back support area and an enlarged abdominal support area, each area having its own first fixed predetermined vertical height, the areas being disposed on the base such that the areas are opposite one another when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer;

b. reduced side areas on the base, having a second predetermined vertical height smaller than said first predetermined vertical height of either support area and

disposed intermediately of the back support and abdominal support areas and opposite one another between the hips and ribs of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist, said reduced side areas being sized to allow the belt to be sufficiently tightened against the back and abdominal walls without encountering the skeletal structure of the ribs or hips of the wearer thereby evenly distributing and providing support to both the back and abdominal walls and to accommodate bending and side-to-side motion of the wearer;

c. a first releasable fastener disposed on said base to permit said opposite outer ends to be secured adjacent one another when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer;

d. an elongate strap of flexible material axially secured to the base, the elongate strap of flexible material having a free flap; and

e. a second fastener comprising a buckle through which the free flap may pass so as to allow a cinchable tightening of the elongate strap when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer.

13. The belt of Claim 12, wherein said first releasable fastener is a hook and loop type fastener.

14. The belt of Claim 12, wherein said first releasable fastener comprises a cinchable strap and said second fastener comprises a buckle.

15. The belt of Claim 12, wherein said enlarged abdominal support area comprises

a. an enlarged first abdominal support position located on one outer end of the base; and

b. an enlarged second abdominal support position located on the other outer end of the base.

16. The belt of Claim 7 wherein the first fixed predetermined vertical height of the enlarged abdominal support area is less than the second fixed predetermined vertical height of the enlarged back support area.

17. A support belt adapted for encircling and being secured to the waist of a wearer for providing both back and abdominal muscle support during strenuous activity while providing a non-interfering support and a non-interfering fit with the skeletal structure of the ribs and hips of the wearer, the belt comprising:

a. an elongate base having a longitudinal axis and opposite outer ends and of a length sufficient to encircle the waist of the wearer, the base including an enlarged back support area and an enlarged abdominal support area, each area having its own first fixed predetermined vertical height, the areas being disposed on the base such that the areas are opposite one another when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer;

b. reduced side areas on the base, having a second predetermined vertical height smaller than said first predetermined vertical height of either support area and disposed intermediately of the back support and abdominal support areas and opposite one another between the hips and ribs of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist, said reduced side areas being sized to allow the belt to be sufficiently tightened against the back and abdominal walls without encountering the skeletal structure of the ribs or hips of the wearer thereby evenly distributing and providing support to both the back and abdominal walls and to accommodate bending and side-to-side motion of the wearer;

c. a first releasable fastener disposed on said base;

d. an elongate strap of flexible material axially secured to the base, the elongate strap of flexible material having a free flap; and

e. a second fastener disposed for engagement with the first fastener to permit said opposite outer ends to be secured adjacent one another when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer.